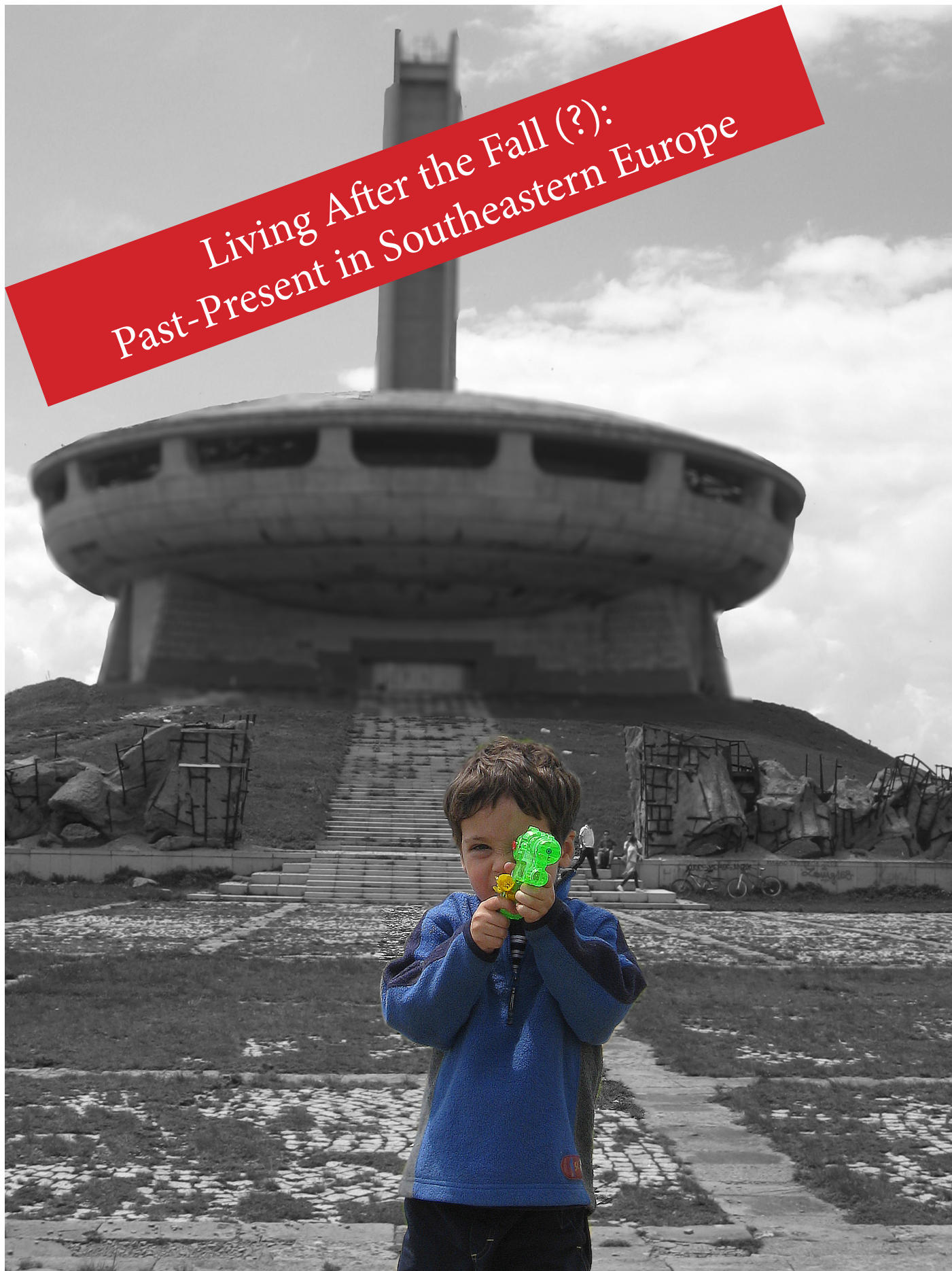


Living After the Fall (?):
Past-Present in Southeastern Europe



June 12-13, 2014
American Research Center in Sofia
Sofia, Bulgaria

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

June 12, 2014

9:30-10:30	Welcome and Opening Remarks and Keynote Address Dr. Eric DeSena, Director the American Research Center in Sofia Dr. Cristofer Scarboro, King's College and ARCS Dr. Ivaylo Ditchchev, Sofia University Keynote Address: Dr. Iskra Baeva, "Bulgarian Students and their Notion of the Age of Socialism"
10:30-12:30	Panel 1: Politics and the State after the Fall 1) Belina Bedini, "The Legitimization of the Albanian Totalitarian Regime" 2) Dr.sc. Selim Bezeraj and Prof.Asoc.Dr. Muhamet Mala, "Political and Social life in Kosovo after 1989" 3) Georgi Burnaski, "Transformational Processes Among the Political Elite of the Bulgarian Turks (1990 – 1992)" 4) Dr. Natalija Perisic, "The national welfare state between socialism and liberalism – the case of Serbia" 5) Prof. Markus Wien, "Collapse and Continuity. Nation Building Policies in 20th Century Bulgaria" 6) Dr. Emilia Zankina, "Politicians Are All Crooks!" Everyday Politics in Bulgaria
12:30-1:30	LUNCH BREAK
1:30-3:30	Panel 2: Culture 1) Dr. Vihra Barova, "Hybrids of delayed 'Westernization': youth subculture identity after 1989" 2) Ruxandra Canache, "Make Love Not War: Cultural Dissent in Communist Romania" 3) Dr. Ivan Hristov, "Rethinking The Critical Heritage of Bulgarian Modernism – Twenty-Five years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall" 4) Dr. Caterina Preda, "The Art of Memorialization in Romania: 'Project 1990' as an anti-monument" 5) Dr. Carol Silverman, "Bulgarian Wedding Music: Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Politics"
3:30-4:00	COFFEE BREAK
4:00-6:00	Panel 3: Memory and Space 1) Dr. Svetlana Antova, "Old Walls - New Walls. Stories and Traces of Past and Present (A Case-study of Belogradchik)" 2) Zlatina Bogdanova, "Mapping the changes: the past and the present of the Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv, Bulgaria" 3) Alexandru Cărlan, "Prosthetic memory and post-memory: cultural encounters with the past in desinging a museum" 4) Dr. Claudia-Florentina Dobre, "Remnants of the Past: Monuments built by communists and their Destiny after the Fall" 5) Dr. Thomas Mackaman, "Their Ruins and Ours: Southeastern Europe and the American Rust Belt in Comparative Perspective" 6) Dr. Yana Yancheva, "Our place, or where the black sheep used to hang out"

June 13, 2014

9:00-11:00	Panel 4: Social Movements, Rights, and Justice 1) Dr. Andrea Grant-Friedman, “The Russian Left and the Breakup of the Post-Soviet Sphere: Ukraine and Yugoslavia in Comparative Perspective” 2) Mariya Ivancheva, “Continuity in Rupture: the transition of the women’s movement from socialist to post-socialist Bulgaria” 3) Dr. Ana Luleva, “Transitional Justice and Memory about Communist Labor Camps in Post-Socialist Bulgaria” 4) Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva, “The transformation of Bulgarian political culture in the process of transition to democracy (comparative analysis between the dominant political culture and the youth political subculture)” 5) Dr. Claudia Udrescu, “The two faces of Janus: Transition and collapse in the Romanian higher education system after 1989”
11:00-11:15	COFFEE BREAK
11:15-1:00	Panel 5: Memory and Identities 1) Dr. Bridget Costello, “Irony, memory, and memorabilia: consuming the Cold War” 2) Prof. Evgenia Kalinova, “Memory and Political Use of the ‘Bulgarian Trace’ during the Transition Period” 3) Dr. Tamar Karaia, “Tendencies of Politics of Memory in Contemporary Georgia” 4) Prof. Evelina Kelbecheva, “History as a Fairy Tale -- the Bulgarian Case” 5) Jovana Vukcevic, “Commodification of the Collective Memory: Yugonostalgia as a Marketing Strategy”
1:00-2:00	LUNCH BREAK
2:00-4:00	Panel 6: Interrogating Dominant Discourses on Inter- and Post-Bellum South-Eastern European Societies 1) Manuela Brenner, “The Construction, De- and Reconstruction of History and Memory: Local Memory Practices of the Memorial Complex at Mrakovica, Bosnia and Herzegovina” 2) Ion Matei Costinescu, “Path Dependency, World Systems Analysis, or Alternative Modernity? Reflections on Interwar Romania and the Bucharest Sociological School” 3) Dr. Paschalidis Panagiotis, “Rethinking the past and present of South-East European societies beyond war and nationalism: The case of post- communist Balkans” 4) Dr. Victor Rizescu, “Marxism and the Left in pre-communist Romania: a study on ideological syncretism and cultural diffusiveness” 5) Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu, “Othering the “Communist Enemy” in the Archives: Constructing the Jailor in the Discourse of Political Detention in Romania”

ABSTRACTS OF CONFERENCE PAPERS

The Legitimization of the Albanian Totalitarian Regime

Belina Bedini

Aleksandër Moisiu University of Durrës, Albania

The totalitarian regime in Albania has been considered as one of the most rigid and isolated of the twentieth century, in the whole Eastern Europe from 1945 to 1991. Even though the isolationist ideology has been convenient to support the status-quo of the communist regime, it led to the social-economic crises, and consequently to the collapse of the communism. However, in order to understand the totalitarian ideology and the behavior of its leader Enver Hoxha, it is important to focus on the particular philosophical principles where the regime found the necessary base to legitimate itself. This specific totalitarian philosophy, in the Albanian post-communist literature, is known as "Enverism". Indeed, the totalitarian leader, tried to legitimate his totalitarian power by pretending and propagandizing that the Marxist-Leninist doctrine constituted the only pure truth, and the common good. In one hand, totalitarian leader tried to legitimate the suppression of any kind of resistance against the totalitarian project. On the other hand, the citizens obeyed to the regime, because they believed that this project would be the embodiment of the pure truth and the common good. This paper will analyze the Albanian dictatorship ideology as an instrument of legitimating. Therefore a strong base of study will be the communist literature that was used as a propaganda instrument. It is significant the fact that the Albanian dictator has published hundreds of books as an author and other hundreds have been published by the Institute of the Marxism Leninism Studies, that was an exclusive propaganda tool of the dictatorship. Through the methodology of the literature review, the paper will try to find out how the E. Hoxha and his oligarchy could justify the choice of communism, but which is more important, how could they stand this regime for almost a half century. In the end the paper will try to answer to the research question: was Enverism a peculiar product of some social, political and historical circumstances?

Political and Social Life in Kosovo after 1989

Dr. sc. Selim Bezeraj and Prof. Asoc. Dr. Muhamet Mala

University of Prishtina

Within this paper will include a review the process of political, economic and cultural developments in Kosovo after 1989. At the same time will be issued a general parallel changes that occurred in communist countries and in Kosovo after 1989. Within this page are presented some key points that will contain the paper. The fall of the Berlin Wall has an undeniable connection with Kosovo, which at that time was isolated under the worst dictatorship in the former communist East countries.

In addition to collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989 also happened to change the autonomy of Kosovo, which has a radical change in the constitutional position of Kosovo. The process of change in Kosovo after 1989 coincides with many political events that occurred as a result of the establishment of Serbian authorities to violent measures. Thus, the impact of 1989 will then inspires the movement of Albanians in Kosovo to make efforts to gain freedom and to become part of Western democracy. Therefore, Albanians in Kosovo in '90 years to become politically organized peaceful resistance by creating institutions to which people will find support in living requirements. In this form the institutions of Kosovo in '90 years played a key role in the changes that occurred within of Kosovo society.

As a result of political developments in the situation of the Albanian population in Kosovo after 1989 became increasingly difficult, in the fact that in Kosovo the Serbian authorities installed a cruel military regime and the administrative police. At the same time this situation was reflected directly in changing the cultural position of Kosovo's population. Almost the public sector employees were excluded from work, this phenomenon that led to poverty and deterioration of economic and financial situation. Schools and university were closed, with Crash pupils and students were forced to remain outside the educational process. Also, press and radio and television were banned activities in the form of Kosovo opinion was interrupted the development of cultural life. As a result able to create thousands of Albanians from Kosovo were forced to leave the country and seek asylum in Western European countries to ensure existence.

Transformational Processes Among the Political Elite of the Bulgarian Turks (1990 – 1992)

Georgi Burnaski
PhD Candidate, Sofia University

The paper Georgi Burnaski will present at the conference “Living after the Fall (?): Past-Present in Southeastern Europe” is devoted to the important problem about the conflict between the proclaimed values of elites in politics and their real attitude towards them. Particular subject of the research is the political elite of the Bulgarian Turks and mainly the parliamentary representation of the Movement for Rights and Freedom in the VII Grand National Assembly and in the XXXVI National Assembly. The paper introduces the author’s multidisciplinary concept about how modern researchers should examine the processes on the edge of the Fall of the communist regimes in South East Europe.

Presenting the dependence between the legitimacy of the leaders of MRF used in the multiparty system for gaining trust and political power with their positions in the totalitarian social pyramid Georgi Burnaski expresses his opinion that the political elite of the Bulgarian Turks in the beginning of the 1990s rises from the role of a mediator between the rulers and masses to a key political actor. Accepting the affirmation that the elite conception doesn’t limit just to those who are on the surface of the political life the author reaches the conclusion that the elite of the Bulgarian Turks doesn’t essentially change itself and is just disguising into new appearance. This means the transformational processes are dictated by the reproductive model according to which the old elite morphs into new one without questioning its privileged positions. These outputted conclusions rise the question how the Bulgarian communist state used its power to shape an obedient elite among the Bulgarian Turks and are there any forms of social engineering that changed the structure of the minority’s community.

The national welfare state between socialism and liberalism – the case of Serbia

Assist. Prof. Natalija Perisic
University of Belgrade

The development of a socialist welfare model in ex-Yugoslavia, which started after World War II, incorporated fundamental political, economic and social changes compared to the previous period. The ideology of those changes was rooted in the Marxist theory, which became consequently modified with a specific the so-called self-management concept. As a result, even though it was socialist, the national welfare system had weaker socialist characteristics compared to other Central and East European countries. It was based on the principles of a Bismarckian-type social insurance with strong elements of redistribution and egalitarianism and the dominant position of the state for the national welfare and public actors in social policy.

As of the 1990s, when the transition began, market principles became dominant in all spheres of life. Partially because of the revolt against the past, and partially because of the strong need to get a foreign capital, values completely different from the socialist ones were adopted, both on individual and social levels. Thus, the market has become the leading ideology, among others, in the welfare system, but the expected positive results have been largely missing.

Delegitimized and compromised socialist values and institutions did not leave any space for the survival of those mechanisms that could question uncritical acceptance of market regulation in the social policy. Absence of essentially relevant social actors led to the absence of a true dialogue in the society. Complete negligence of the position and the role of trade unions, in the situation of the presence of powerful advocates of neo-liberalism, whose position has been increasingly stronger by constant deficits in the state budget, fundamentally limited the orientation of the state towards alternative solutions, such as social democracy.

Additionally, the transition of the very factors of social policy was an obstacle for reaching an agreement about desirable ways of realizing welfare. However, the absolutism of state and absolutism of market were not at all times competing ideas, and their simplification resulted in their parallel existence during some periods. It was translated into fundamental controversies of the basics of social policy theory and voluntaristic social policy in practice.

In the introductory part, the author depicts the main characteristics of the Serbian welfare state during socialism and try to explain the reasons due to which the socialist social policy became completely unacceptable for the majority of the population. This part is followed by an analysis of changes of the welfare state as of the 1990s in general, i.e. on the level of policies. The third part is central with its focus on the pension, health and unemployment insurance as well as social care from the point of view of changes reflecting the liberal nature of the welfare system. In this part, the author also tries to anticipate the trajectory of future changes. The last chapter questions the legitimacy of the Serbian welfare state.

Collapse and Continuity. Nation Building Policies in 20th Century Bulgaria

Prof. Markus Wien
American University in Bulgaria

The attempt to conceptualise the socio-economic and the socio-political developments in Bulgaria in the middle of the 20th century as a nation-building process would necessarily result in a re-interpretation of a period in the history of a Southeast European country which has not attracted too much international scholarly attention so far. This paper will try to formulate hypotheses - by definition debatable - and point in the direction a research project should follow. Such a project would take into consideration seemingly objective processes that took place within the framework of the implementation of Soviet-style socialism in Bulgaria during the first twenty years after World War II. In addition to that, it would look at programmatic discourses among the Bulgarian political leadership. The analysis of these discourses would highlight the way in which Bulgarian officials viewed the Bulgarian society of that time as a national entity in the modern sense, and to which degree they regarded the national integration of the Bulgarian society as an essential task. Consequently, the question of a further investigation would be whether and how Bulgarian discourses touched upon the issue of what was to be done in order to turn, in reference to a monograph by Eugen Weber, „Peasants into Bulgarians“.

This perspective allows for a new contextualisation of the Communist regime in Bulgaria particularly within the general narrative of the national history of the country since the 19th century. As a consequence, the period of socialism could be repositioned in Bulgarian as well as Southeast European history. The necessity to do this, i.e. to view the period of socialism as an integral part of the national history of Bulgaria instead of isolating it from other periods by emphasising the “break” of 1944 – this necessity becomes even clearer when looking at the national historical narrative that served as a basis of the fundamental decisions taken in terms of the formation of a national identity during the first two post war decades. Here continuities with the pre-socialist narrative outweigh the discontinuities by far. It seems, thus, that the Bulgarian communist regime continued and, at the same time, intensified as well as modified a nation building process using foundations laid before 1944.

“Politicians Are All Crooks!” Everyday Politics in Bulgaria

Dr. Emilia Zankina
American University in Bulgaria

This chapter examines the role and importance of politics in the everyday life of ordinary Bulgarians: How do average Bulgarian citizens view politics and politicians? Is politics a significant part of ordinary Bulgarian's everyday life? How do they think that political decisions and behavior of politicians affect them? What are the main motivations behind their electoral choices? Tracing political dynamics in Bulgaria following the collapse of communism and voting behavior since the first post-communist elections in 1990, the chapter focuses on public attitudes towards politics and politicians in general that are important in shaping the political landscape in the country. The chapter further questions whether we notice differences in public attitudes towards politics between people politically socialized during communism and after the fall of the communist regime, thus accounting for the communist legacy effect.

Hybrids of delayed ‘Westernization’: youth subculture identity after 1989

Dr. Vihra Barova
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Subculture identity is overall a group identity, where every individual is differentiated, active and creative member of his/her group. I may ask, what version, and I dare to say, correction of post-socialist transformation may these people suggest? What is their vision of a ‘good life’? When it concerns postsocialist transition it is better to think about ‘personality crisis’ and personal efforts to situate oneself in society even when the concepts of society is rejected by the group where individual participates.

My point is that the process of building new identity in a postsocialist country has two main and opposite subjective features: delay and retrieval. This contest brings simultaneously to accepting of some and rejecting of others western, neoliberal concepts of individual. We observe delay in life-style, on one hand, and economic retrieve connected to consumption, on other hand. I will examine these subjective features in the perspective of consumption (as practice and imagination), space occupation, the influence of parent's class, and the projection of the past.

The main research problem is the new postsocialist identity of subculture youths, which is build by the controversy between old (before 1989) and new idea (after 1989) of the West, and also between the strive for 'good life' in terms of consumption and the anti-consumerism shown as a label of youth subculture styles. Consequently, the fieldwork site is the urban area of Sofia – the capital of Bulgaria, which is the focal point for the existing subcultures.

Make Love Not War: Cultural Dissent in Communist Romania

Ruxandra Canache

Ph.D. Candidate, McGill University

My research looks at the culture of dissent in the last decades of Communist rule in Eastern Europe. Youth subculture and the social transformations that have and continued to affect the new generations of social and politically active youngsters in the former European Communist countries, where democracy remains fragile, have only recently been subject to scrutiny and academic analysis. In Romania no such study exists.

My PhD thesis explores the history and social transformation of the Black Sea Romanian border community of Vama Veche, focusing on the culture of dissent that developed there in the 1960s and reached its peak in the 1980s. Initially a small fishermen's village founded in 1811 by a handful of Gagauz families, Vama Veche became famous in the 1970s as an oasis of freedom far from the prying eyes of what was then a totalitarian Communist state. During the Communist era, concern for border patrol sight lines spared Vama Veche the development that occurred in other Romanian Black Sea resorts. It became a hangout for intellectuals who dozed or sunbathed naked and discussed philosophy on the sandy beach, sitting under reed umbrellas. Some stayed in tents on the beach, or rented rooms from peasants in the tiny village next to the beach. Since the late 1990s Vama Veche has experienced development and gentrification, which has led to a "Save Vama Veche" campaign that is lobbying for the area's environmental conservation and a halt to development and mass tourism. In 2004, allegedly as a result of the campaign, legislation was enacted, limiting construction of new housing and roads or paving of existing roads.

The idea of cultural, passive resistance and civil disobedience is not currently very popular amongst Romanian elites who are looking at the neighbouring states to define the concept of dissidence, oftentimes forgetting that Romania endured the toughest of all Communist regimes in Europe, except perhaps Albania. The novelty of my research consists in refuting the claim asserted by most Romanian intellectuals that Romanian society did not resist Communism or its ideology. This claim causes resentment and frustration especially amongst the younger generations of Romanians who did not experience Communism directly. However, despite the fact that Romania did not have a well-organized dissidence movement or a very popular samizdat culture comparable with that of Poland and Czechoslovakia, subversive writings and satirical political pamphlets were circulated, sometimes, as in the case of Vama Veche, quite openly. Therefore, instead of a polarized discourse that looks at the past from a deterministic perspective, a more nuanced approach is appropriate. In Romania, tacit, cultural resistance took a unique form; it did not develop into a mass phenomenon, as was the case of other socialist countries from the Eastern Bloc, but it was sufficiently widespread to pose at least a cultural resistance to mainstream propaganda and was perceived as such by Communist authorities.

Dissidence and Repression are dynamic concepts; their understanding and definition changes in time and space and differs from country to country. These two notions depend on and reinforce each-other. Newer and more sophisticated forms of repression produce different acts of resistance. In his seminal book, *Carnival of Revolutions*, Padraic Kenney distinguishes five types of opposition to Communist regimes in Central Europe: reformist dissent within the party itself, "civil society" dissent pioneered by Vaclav Havel, nationalist opposition, the church and counter-cultural movements. To be sure, banned folk songs performed on the beach were not in itself a form of opposition, but such "imagined communities" served as a milieu where some people would discover opposition and strategies for opposing the regime. Communist states often sanctioned youth movements and organizations providing the illusion of freedom, and many critics of the regimes adhered to the "new social contract" proposed by the state that provided them with both financial means and a limited creative expression in state sponsored alternative cultural spaces. A popular Hungarian joke illustrates the situation: "If Solzhenitsyn had lived in Hungary, he would have been appointed president of the Writers' Union and the Gulag Archipelago would never have been written." Nevertheless, opposition emerged from such organizations, as the case of the dissident movement in Slovenia illustrates. In this

context, youth socialist culture functions as an extension of the official ideological line but also as a parallel one.

The need to reconfigure our current or at least usual understanding of dissidence within the existing Romanian frame becomes essential and could also impact the way we look at and understand socialist culture in East Central and South Eastern Europe. This type of analysis could also explain the transitional period that followed the demise of Communism, as well as the different paths and challenges that each country had to face. In an era when prolonged economic uncertainty forces young people to look for easy answers, the popularity of extreme right-wing ideologies is on the rise in Central and South Eastern Europe. Thus, questions like: what factors inform these attitudes? and what role can and should intellectuals play in this current state of affairs? become ever more critical.

Rethinking The Critical Heritage of Bulgarian Modernism – Twenty-Five years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall

Dr. Ivan Hristov
Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

For decades under the communist regime in Bulgaria, literary modernism was renounced as a deviation from the “correct” norm of Socialist Realism. Modernist works by some of classic Bulgarian writers were disparaged and neglected, while other modernist writers were directly struck from the canon and forgotten. With the partial liberalization of the regime during the 1960s, some of the Bulgarian modernists, especially those with leftist convictions, were rehabilitated. However, the true rethinking of Bulgarian modernism came shortly before the Transition – during the 1980s. Modernism began to be recognized ever more often as a positive and creative movement, and after 1989, it was acknowledged as one of the most significant phenomena within Bulgarian literature. After 1989, numerous monographs about individual authors and literary circles, as well as whole modernist trends, contributed to a new interpretation of that period and to the objective construction of a heretofore unwritten history of the movement. The present paper aims to present and analyze this process of change, with a particular focus on the work of female modernists and on the question of the local/the global, as well as to examine the specific interrelations between the various modernist and totalitarian ideologies.

Art of memorialization in Romania: “Project 1990” as an anti-monument

Dr. Caterina Preda
University of Bucharest

Before 1989, one of the most important Bucharest statues dedicated to a communist leader was that of Lenin in the Piața Scânteii (Flame Square). Inaugurated in 1960, the statue of Lenin stood in front of the Scânteia Press house - molded on the Soviet model - for 30 years. Removed in January 1990 in a celebratory event, and then abandoned by Romanian authorities, moved through several locations, the Lenin statue was taken by Romanian curator and artist Ioana Ciocan together with that of Petru Groza, another Romanian communist leader, as a first step toward the establishment of a Statue park as those already organized in Budapest or in Lithuania. In the same time, Ciocan is also the initiator of “Project 1990” that, between 2010 and 2014 sought to replace the empty pedestal of the former Lenin statue with alternative artworks that were exhibited temporarily.

This paper will present the different aspects incorporated by “Project 1990” and the artworks exhibited. It will do so comparing other types of monuments that are found in Romanian public space after 1990 and as a result of a state action or a private initiative. Conceived as an “anti-monument” (Young) “Project 1990” is also a pretext to begin talking about the way communism is remembered in Romania and how the “transition” to democracy was shaped, and was a failed one (in the opinion of many of the artists exhibiting). Between 2010 and 2014, 19 projects were organized by Ciocan on the empty pedestal. The image of Lenin that Ioana Ciocan and Mihai Zgondoiu presented is a much more detached and even cheerful display of the grey, heavy, serious Lenin. This version of Lenin reminds us of other post-1990 East European Lenin presences in film, such as the flying over Berlin Lenin in the film “Goodbye Lenin” (Wolfgang Becker, 2003) or the sleeping, sailing over the Danube Lenin in Theo Angelopoulos’ “Ulysses’ Gaze” (1995).

Bulgarian Wedding Music: Nationalism, Ethnicity, and Cultural Politics

Prof. Carol Silverman
University of Oregon

Wedding music, "svatbarska muzika" has made an indelible imprint on the musical landscape in Bulgaria. This presentation analyzes this musical genre from its inception during socialist Bulgaria, through the fall of communism to the present, interpreting its varying political, economic and artistic contexts and meanings. Wedding music provides a window into the changing roles of the state and the market and the economic challenges of professional musicians during socialism and postsocialism. It also raises issues around cultural and political questions, such what is Bulgarian folk music, what is authenticity, and what is "Gypsy" music. I focus on the important role of Roma in the development and dissemination of wedding music. Roma paradoxically, are indispensable in music yet rejected as people. All these issues must be seen in the context of the rise of new forms of music such as chalgia (pop/folk) and new media outlets. Wedding music, thus illuminates questions of nationalism, ethnicity, and Bulgarian identity through dynamic political periods.

I analyze the changing landscape of wedding music in terms of issues of representation, nationalism and the capitalist market. Music has become an important expressive form in configuring the identity of Bulgarians of all ethnicities; depending on context, genre and packaging, folk music can support or resist nationalism, integration, and interethnic communication. Music is also an arena where representational conflicts arise between majority and minorities as well as between minority groups such as Roma, Pomaks, and Turks. I bring an interdisciplinary analytical lens to this work, with insights from anthropology, folklore, ethnomusicology, gender studies, and cultural studies. My fieldwork has taken place in Bulgaria from 1980 to the present and on many American tours with Bulgarian musicians.

Old Walls - New Walls. Stories and Traces of Past and Present (A Case-study of Belogradchik)

Assist. Prof. Svetlana Antova
IEFEM

This paper is based on a case study of a small border town Belogradchik, located in the poorer corner of Europe - Bulgarian northwest. Ruins of buildings, old inscription under a newly painted façade, letters fallen from a monument of a hero which name almost nobody knows. Building of a former telephone factory from the near communist's past is destroying consistently the sight of local government and with its blessing, a businessman dreams to establish a private museum with the first electricity generator and first printing press and to restore the old lemonade factory, debris from a former chalet ended up in a private garden, and a scientist chemist writes a blog and a facebook page with historical archives and documents about the town and its region. The material traces does not just tell stories, these are testimonies about what happen and about present people's attitudes to the past. In some sense this is an attempt for doing an urban archaeology. By choosing a material object the author traces the memories and self-reflections it provokes in respondents from different generations. So putting the pieces of the stories and tracking the deletion or restoration of a material object, the author builds her analyzes about the mechanisms through which a Bulgarian border town revitalizes or neglected segments of its past. Or in other words, this paper goes beyond the question "why" by searching answers of the next question – "how".

Mapping the changes: the past and the present of the Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Dr. Zlatina Bogdanova
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at BAS

This presentation will address the process of rediscovering and redefining the nation's cultural heritage by presenting it in a new institutional and conceptual framework as one of the distinctive features of the Bulgarian postsocialist transition. One particular example will be given more consideration – the Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv thoroughly renovated and modernized over the past decade.

Closed down for the public since 1995, the new museum building was reopened in 2010 with a new permanent exposition displaying artifacts illustrating the material culture in the region of Plovdiv over millennia of time. In historical terms, the museum is one of the oldest cultural institutions in Bulgaria and definitely the oldest in Plovdiv, established immediately after the National Liberation. Later the museum collections had established the foundations of three other significant cultural institutions in the city – the City Library, the Ethnographic Museum, and, the City Gallery of Fine Arts. The history of the Archaeological Museum in Plovdiv is a fine illustration of the shift in state cultural policies – now mainly focused on re-establishing the networks of cultural institutions (museum, galleries) and archeological sites (e.g. the renovated section of the Roman stadium in Plovdiv now displayed to the public, the current excavation, preservation and restoration of key archaeological structure such as the Roman Forum and Odeon in the centre of Plovdiv, etc.). The archaeological structures, artifacts and works of art are presently considered as valuable cultural resources with strategic significance for the national economy. For that reason the issue of cultural resource management is invariably associated with the expansion of cultural tourism in Bulgaria as part of the integrated EU economy. Exactly the networks of cultural sites have become central in the government programs for regional development by attracting a great amount of resources and expertise.

Prosthetic memory and post-memory: cultural encounters with the past in desinging a museum

Dr. Alexandru Cărlan and Dr. Mălina Ciocea

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (Romania)

This research investigates the symbolic resources of collective memory and the remembrance practices of a generation that has not experienced directly the communist period, in the context of investigating the potential public of a Museum of Communism in Bucharest. Starting from data gathered through focus groups, we investigate the sources of representations on the communist period and the potential public's engagement with the past, by looking at the role of media representations and stereotypes in building an image about the past. In our analysis we are particularly interested in the contextual choice between alternative remembrance resources: the family, history - as it is institutionalized in textbooks, various forms of public memory (museums, statues, novels, media products, events). Our analysis is guided by the conceptual framework offered by recent studies on post-memory and prosthetic memory and focuses on the construction of the experiential archive required in the elaboration of the prosthetic memory. What type of experiential engagement is capable of triggering the public's empathy towards a past alterity? How can a museum become a space of public deliberation on the past, rather than an institution which adjudicates the past? We notice, in our results, an apparent gap between the traditional way the Museum of Communism's potential public sees the institution's function (to educate, to warn against a past which must not be repeated) and the type of museum experience this public would expect (the absence of permanent exhibition, a dynamic concept, a reception experience which is modern, unguided, multi-sensorial). An explanation is provided in relation with two interconnected issues: the bidirectional relationship between a projected museum and an (equally elusive) public, and the role of such a museum in the current debate on the memory of communism.

Remnants of the Past: Monuments built by communists and their Destiny After the Fall

Dr. Claudia-Florentina Dobre

Centre Régional Francophone de Recherches Avancées en Sciences Sociales

“Crossroads images”, as Régine Robin called them, the monuments are sometimes at stake in the appropriation, disavowal processes of the past, while still being marks of a personal identity of a city, society, and even of a nation. They are concrete images of the rapport to the past of the society which builds, commemorates, and sometimes, destroys them. Moreover, they are under attack of vandalism when changes occur in the society, especially during revolutions, “Coups d’État”, etc.

The communist monuments, like any trace speaking about a darkened and controversial past, were victims of the regime collapse, but also the object of active politics of oblivion or/and re-appropriation. They are privileged topics for a research on the politics of memory of the communist regime.

My presentation aims at analyzing the memorial policies concerning the Romanian national/public/collective memory after the fall of communism through a research focused on a few

non-existing monuments representing communist figures. I argue that acts of destroying these monuments played an important role in legitimizing a new “political order”, being the zero point of a new memorial construction. My presentation will try to find answers to questions like: Destroying communists monuments symbolize erasing the communist past? What happened to the empty spots of non-existing monuments? Are monuments vehicles for ideology?

Their Ruins and Ours: Southeastern Europe and the American Rust Belt in Comparative Perspective

Assist. Prof. Ahomas Mackaman

King's College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

The fall of the Stalinist Eastern European regimes between 1989 and 1991 has generally been understood as a *sui generis* phenomenon. This paper proposes to broaden this understanding through comparative analysis of Southeastern Europe and the American “Rust Belt,” cities and regions of the northern industrial heartland such as Detroit and southeastern Michigan.

In both areas landscapes are dominated by shuttered factories and decaying industrial cities, visual reminders of better days long gone. Both areas have suffered catastrophic decline, measurable in impoverishment, unemployment, and shrinking populations. On the other extreme, in both the US and the former Soviet bloc narrow layers of the population have become far richer, observable for example in Gini index data on inequality.

The outcomes are comparable, but so in fact are the origins. In the global political economy of the “long boom,” (ca. 1945-1973) the mass industrial unions in the US played a role analogous to the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe: both stifled independent working class struggles while providing limited material gains as underwriters of a sort of social contract for a “good life.” Afterward, the same global financial pressures that shattered the autarkic economic systems of the Soviet bloc were simultaneously undermining basic industry in the US—steel, auto, rubber, coal, etc.—sectors of the economy in which the mass industrial unions once dominated.

These global processes lead in Eastern Europe to the apparently sudden collapse of the Stalinist regimes, or, more accurately, their conversion into capitalist regimes—while in the US, over the course of the 1980s the unions—epitomized by the once powerful United Auto Workers union—were converted from organizations that advanced workers’ interests into mechanisms through which wage-cutting and layoffs were imposed.

‘Our place’, or where the ‘black sheep’ used to hang out

Senior Assist. Prof. Yana Yancheva

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies and Ethnographic Museum at BAS

The study is a part of a larger project, focused on the continuity of the rock and metal subculture in a particular small town of Northwestern Bulgaria. It is interested in the penetration of rock culture on a local level during the 60’s and the conflicts between the youths and the socialist society. The research tracks the formation of rock and metal subcultures and their impact on the life of the small town; as well as the changing group identity and the generational continuity in the local subculture community.

The topic was chosen for several reasons. Most of the researches related to youth subcultures in the field of anthropology and sociology focus on the situation in larger cities. The study of a small subcultural community, which remains in many aspects away from the cultural and information flows but tries to express and assert its identity, would allow a more dense cognitive picture of youth (sub)culture in Bulgaria on the border between two political “eras”. It would also shed some light on how the micro communities construct their identities and enter in the macro framework of the rock culture and youth culture in general.

The present paper is interested in the development of the local subcultural community in the 90-s of 20th century – a decade of political, economic and social transition for Bulgaria, which corresponds to the symbolical transition in the members’ biographies. The studied community is presented from the perspective of its shared and inhabited place – the local rock bar. I will focus on the description of the atmosphere in the bar, its social characteristics, history and functions, the social status of the members. But the main purpose is to analyze the important connections between the subcultural community and the place, to trace the local subcultural development on the basics of the public and the intimate life of the community, as well as the dynamics of the group and individual identities in the conditions of radical social changes after 1989.

The research is based on the qualitative methods – participant observation, conducted in specific urban areas inhabited by representatives of the studied subcultures, biographical and thematic interviews. A significant method is the participant observation, provoked by my personal participation and involvement to the examined subcultures.

The Russian Left and the Breakup of the Post-Soviet Sphere: Ukraine and Yugoslavia in Comparative Perspective

Dr. Andrea Grant-Friedman
Western Michigan University

The dismantling of the USSR and the full-scale restoration of a market economy in the former Soviet sphere was the product of joint efforts by sections of the Communist Party and leading layers of the Soviet intelligentsia, working with the support of the West. Perestroika was sold to the population as a further realization of socialism, the embodiment of the “socialist” principle “from each according to his ability, to each according to his work.” The reality turned out to be quite different. Much of the population in Russia and elsewhere experienced sharp downward social mobility, while segments of the former nomenklatura augmented their social position. In the USSR’s non-Russian republics, and throughout the former Soviet sphere, ethnic elites positioned themselves to win the economic and political spoils of dissolution.

These economic consequences of the Soviet collapse have been well documented. But we are still witnessing and assessing the geopolitical consequences of dissolution. The violent breakup of Yugoslavia now appears to have only been an initial precursor. Today, the fallout of the dismantling of the USSR is once again erupting into full view, as Ukraine’s east-west divide emerges at the center of a conflict between Russia and the United States.

During the unraveling of the Soviet Union, wide swathes of the left intelligentsia—inside and outside the USSR—hailed Gorbachev’s policies. Today, similar social forces are lauding the US-backed coup in Ukraine as a progressive, revolutionary advance. This paper will examine the positions of layers of the left in Russia towards events in Ukraine in comparative perspective. As a point of contrast, it will examine how these social forces responded to and appraised the break-up of Yugoslavia, an event that may presage the forms of ethnic mobilization and conflict that will erupt in Ukraine should the country descend into civil war.

Continuity in Rupture: the transition of the women’s movement from socialist to post-socialist Bulgaria

Mariya Ivancheva
PhD Candidate, Central European University in Budapest

This paper briefly narrates the history of the Bulgarian women’s movement. I make two claims: On the one hand, I show that, due to two abrupt regime changes in 1944 and 1989, it is difficult to speak of one women’s movement in Bulgaria. Even though a movement dealing with women’s issues has long been present in Bulgaria, there has been little to no continuity in terms of membership and processes of learning between movements in different historical eras (before 1944, 1944-1989, and since 1989). On the other hand, however, I argue that there is a paradoxical continuity within this movement. Despite changes in the actors involved and the frames utilized by the movement in different historical periods, it has largely been the purview of an establishment of elite women, well-positioned to cooperate with the state and international high-level political actors, but with few links to the grassroots. A picture emerges of a movement characterized by an elite-driven continuity of rupture: a repeated historical pattern in which elites skilled in the accumulation and management of state capital abolish and re-found the women’s movement anew.

Transitional Justice and Memory about Communist Labour Camps in Post-Socialist Bulgaria

Assoc. Prof. Ana Luleva
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum at BAS

A significant aspect of the post-socialist transformation in Bulgaria is the policy of justice. The concepts of justice, restitution, compensation and identification of victims, de-collectivization, and reconciliation are debated in Bulgarian society after 1989 as closely related to memory – memory was turning into a key-organizing concept of those processes. My paper shall discuss the relation between discourses of justice and memory politic in Bulgaria after 1989 focusing on one aspect of transitional justice – memorialization of the communist labour camps. It is based on ethnographic study of different memory groups and also on field research conducted in the small town of Belene, the place where the biggest Bulgarian communist work camp once operated.

The transformation of Bulgarian political culture in the process of transition to democracy (comparative analysis between the dominant political culture and the youth political subculture)

Assist. Prof. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva
University of National and World Economy

It is a matter of discussion whether the Bulgarian transition to democracy is an ongoing process or it is over. What is certain is that the democratic institutions are established and in 2002 the European commission concludes that Bulgaria is a state with working market economy. According to Ralf Dahrendorf the post-communist states need one more element in order to make stable what is achieved – it is the social foundation. The transformation of political culture may take more than 60 years but it is a process and it is important to know where we are 25 years after the beginning of the democratic transition. And a more important question is what the attitudes of the young people are because they are those who are supposed to continue or stop the democratic development.

For the purposes of this study a “youth subculture” refers to those who are between the age of 18 and 30 by the end of 2013. The dominant political culture and the youth subculture are compared in seven indicators: 1/ attitudes toward state and nation; 2/ attitudes toward politics; 3/ attitudes toward political parties; 4/ attitudes toward external “protector”; 5/ attitudes toward democratic political system and its functioning in Bulgaria; 6/ attitudes toward the role of the leader; 7/ attitudes toward the personal activity in the political process. The data which used is from European Values Study and World Values Survey and is collected in the period 1990-2013.

The two faces of Janus:

Transition and collapse in the Romanian higher education system after 1989

Dr. Claudia Maria Udrescu
University of Bucharest

Almost 25 years after the fall of communist regimes in CEE allow us to measure the distance toward a real democratic regime. There is a long distance from the general hope in December 1989-that some called transition- to the loss of hope at present, in terms of political and civic life.

My paper aims to underline the trajectory of higher education institutions after the regime change, throughout the so called transition to the EU accession and the present situation. The study case of my paper is based on the University of Bucharest, one of the biggest universities in Romania, ranked as a research university (type A).

During the 25 years Romanian universities walked from the communist system, to the transition (transition to/transition from) and are experiencing the collapse nowadays (in terms of financing, resources, worldwide ranking, outputs of research etc.).

The paper will follow the two Janus head metaphor, as Peter Maassen wrote about in 1988, one head looking to the past and the other looking to the future. The situation of universities in Romania, as observed in the past 25 years, is similar: past and future were the main directions, with no reference for the present. The findings are based on the documents from the archive of the University of Bucharest, policy documents etc.

Irony, memory, and memorabilia: consuming the Cold War

Dr. Bridget Costello
King's College (PA)

Although originally coined by journalist Naomi Klein (2002) to describe a narrow pattern of late 20th C. consumption, one which confronts encroaching corporate co-optation of youth culture with tongue-in-cheek ambivalence, the term ‘ironic consumption’ is also eminently useful in considering certain nostalgic practices through which individuals and communities interact with Cold War memory and its material relics and simulacra. In the latter context, ironic consumption is practiced by those who have a particular type of conflicted relationship to the Cold War that situates them as both ‘winners’ and ‘losers’ of this history. Like ‘ostalgie’ and other nostalgic practices, ironic consumption serves to define and circumscribe communities of memory ori-

ented towards a potentially discreditable history; unlike ostalgie, however, ironic consumption explicitly permits individuals to maintain a critical (and easily renounceable) distance between identity and history. Here, I describe various factors that govern how, why, and for whom rituals of ironic consumption operate, and draw upon various examples of ironic consumption with an emphasis on the touristic experience of post-socialist Eastern Europe. Following Pierre Bourdieu (1977;1984) on the primacy of social class as a determinant of individual taste-formation, and adopting a Goffmanian perspective on the role of ritual in delineating the contours of individual and communal identity, I argue that ironic consumption is a ritualized form of status anxiety, the performance of which mediates the tension between the competing status claims of multiple social locations and experiences – as is true of a certain type of Western tourist who may be defined a ‘winner’ by nationality without a corresponding taste of the economic, political, and/or moral spoils. I conclude with some remarks upon the relationship of ironic consumption to production processes, and the implications of ironic consumption and production for national branding, tourist economies, and discourses of Cold War memory and identity.

Memory and Political Use of the “Bulgarian Trace” during the Transition Period

Prof. Evgenia Kalinova
Sofia University “St. Kliment Ohridski”

Following the collapse of the communist regime in Bulgaria in 1989 public remembrance focused on topics that used to be taboo during the preceding period. One of them – the actions of the Bulgarian secret services – continues to attract public interest even today. During the 1980s the world media presented their participation in the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II as a fact, which received the label “Bulgarian trace”. This was an important moment in the second Cold War, and the goal of this presentation is to trace who, when, how and why brings back this episode from the socialist past after 1989. It will demonstrate how during the transition period this topic is evoked during key moments in Bulgaria’s foreign policy, though not so much in relation to its geopolitical clout, but rather as an additional argument during disagreements between the “great powers”. The “Bulgarian trace” also becomes an important weapon in the Bulgarian political sphere, often used to discredit the political opponent.

The analysis of the remembrance of the “Bulgarian trace” after 1989 leads to several conclusions. First, no incontrovertible proof of Bulgarian participation is uncovered after the collapse of socialism despite a thorough research by Bulgarian and international actors. Second, Italy shows no desire to return to this topic in its bilateral and regional relations; rather, it is Washington that pushes the Bulgarian authorities to search for evidence of Bulgarian participation. Third, while the BSP prefers to avoid explaining events from its recent past, the UDF initially uses the “Bulgarian trace” opportunistically to discredit the BSP. Their own interest in the topic declines when, once in power, they need to present Bulgaria positively in order to ensure its integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures. Nevertheless, sensational allegations are given much wider publicity than objective evidence that refutes the “Bulgarian trace”.

Tendencies of Politics of Memory in Contemporary Georgia

Assist. Prof. Tamar Karaia
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

After the collapse of the soviet empire, former soviet republics started to build their statehood, to consolidate the nation around new ideals and to transform old identities, which would confront to the soviet one, was the main challenge of this process. While creating new collective memory politicians re-interpreted their national histories, they re-write history textbooks, invented new heroes and enemies, established ceremonies etc.

Georgia, as a former soviet republic began dealing with the soviet past, however, in the 90th these processes were limited and delayed, we cannot speak about contiguous politics of memory and this caused changeable foreign policy priorities. After the Rose Revolution, the new government brought about reforms in most of the key spheres of institutional life, re-addressing the totalitarian past saw a number of problematic manifestations in political and cultural life in the post-soviet country. For renovation of state system, it was essential to make boundaries with the pre-revolution state system correspondingly. Analyzing the politics of memory, symbolism is the most notable attitude of this period. Subsequent to 2006 when Georgian citizens have deported from Russian Federation, tendencies of politics of memory changed rapidly. In the political discourse appeared

terms such as “occupation”, “repression” etc. From this period, the strategies of memory could be associated with politics of victimization and creation of the collective memory prioritized as a national security issue. Several cases discussed in this research as the example of the politics of memory in contemporary Georgia; among them are Museum of Soviet Occupation, The State Commission for Establishing the Historical Truth and debates around so-called Lustration Law. All from these “memory sites” realized in the Eastern European countries, and using this version of the narrative in Georgia conditioned by its counter Russian character.

History as a Fairy Tale - the Bulgarian Case

Prof. Evelina Kelbecheva
American University in Bulgaria

Bulgaria is a champion in nostalgia in post-communist Eastern Europe. Why? My proposed paper is an attempt to answer this question based on the results of the latest study of realms of historical memory in Bulgaria. Almost half a century of our newest history presents basically no realm of memory for the huge majority of Bulgarians (less than 5% of our interviewees indicate Communism/Socialism as a realm of memory).

Still, for the Communist period there exists a multitude of diametrically opposed narratives, and the prevailing trend is the one of obscuring the memory of the sharpness of the social and political contradictions and the crimes of the political elite. Thus, the essence of the Grand Historical Narrative in Bulgaria could be compared to a Grand Fairy Tale. There a coherent, emotional and happy-ending story is told, and everyone is satisfied.

I elaborate on the reasons why the newest academic historiography is still unable to provide an alternative for the distorted-mirror reflection of that time. Further my paper explores the emergence of the huge wave of para-history (TV history programs, yellow press, social nets, etc.) that became extremely instrumental in spreading all kind of appealing to the general public nostalgic stories about communism. Finally, in Bulgaria the problem is that we are dealing not with realms of historical memory – we are dealing with a well-organized strategy of creation of non-memory (or non-knowledge) about communism.

Commodification of the Collective Memory: Yugonostalgia as a Marketing Strategy

Jovana Vukcevic
EHESS Paris / Charles University Prague

This paper focuses on a specific type of contemporary nostalgia for the Yugoslav past, emerging in recent years across the post-Yugoslav space – Yugonostalgia. This nostalgia creates a new Yugoslavia from the ashes of the old – a depoliticized Yugoslavia, not a state or an ideology, but a life story, a personal and social history that happened to take place within the former state. It is argued in the paper that Yugonostalgia can be understood as a longing for the solidarity, sociability and dignity of the socialist life-style, and even as a critique of the consumerist aesthetics of modern capitalism. However, in no way has it been a call to re-establish a Yugoslav state or to validate its ideological propaganda. Furthermore, in the intersection of capitalist profit-making and communist heritage, nostalgia has become more than a simple discursive construction, emerging from the idealized collective memory- it turned into a veritable marketing strategy exploiting Yugonostalgic symbols. Media campaigns that instigate warm feelings for Yugo-commodities and positive associations with the former state create new patterns of consumptions seeking to commercialize the nostalgic experiences. This study, therefore, focuses on this highly profitable form of Yugonostalgia by arguing that companies in the region are largely exploiting “nostalgic” capital by stimulating positive emotions from the past associated with certain memories. It tends to explain how nostalgia has been used to brand

Yugoslav products and how collective memories impact consumer’s decision-making. How, through the identification with certain values and products from the period of communist Yugoslavia, did a whole new market of nostalgia emerge? The central argument is that, while people have relied on nostalgia as a collective therapy for diverse perturbations of the memory, to preserve values from the socialist period and create a bridge with their ex-compatriots, certain brands (supermarket goods as much as rock bands, politicians, or TV shows) have based their success on Yugoslavia’s commodification. In this complex interaction, the collective memory was used as a reconciliation tool as much as a marketing strategy.

The Construction, De- and Reconstruction of History and Memory: Local Memory Practices of the Memorial Complex at Mrakovica, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dr. Manuela Brenner
University of Regensburg

My most recent research examines the memory practices of the memorial complex at Mrakovica at the Kozara National Park in the Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The original concept of the memorial site, founded in 1972, was to keep the Kozara-epos alive. The erected monument, the memorial wall and the museum were built to remember one of the biggest battles during the Second World War on Yugoslav soil during which more than ten thousand Partisan fighters and civilians lost their lives. During the communist era the memorial site fit into the official memory frame: the high number of casualties, especially civilians, was put into the foreground and the Partisans in their struggle for liberation were glorified. The key component of the official narrative was the slogan brotherhood and unity. After the armed conflict in the 1990s, the site underwent several transformations. New memorial frames were set by nationalists; thus history and memory were thereby de- and reconstructed. The new narrative included not only victims of the Second World War but exclusively those victims belonging to the ethnic group of Serbs of the First World War and the conflict in 1992-95. In 2012, the exhibition at the museum was reopened after it had undergone another re-conceptualization, another reconstruction of history and memory. Analysing documents, interviews, and ethnographic observations which were gathered during several research trips to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2010-2013, this study suggests that a political transition towards a nationalist approach of history was clearly visible during the 1990s at the memorial site. But even though the new exhibition, installed in 2012 at the museum, offers a less one-sided and provocative approach, a political transition concerning the memory conflicts which reflects the still existing gap between different ethnic groups is not evident.



Path Dependency, World Systems Analysis, or Alternative Modernity? Reflections on Interwar Romania and the Bucharest Sociological School

Ion Matei Costinescu
Ph.D. Candidate, University of Bucharest, Romania

This paper assesses the concept of alternative modernity from the perspective of the social modernization and nation-building projects undertaken by the Bucharest Sociological School during the interwar period. The analysis commences with a critique of the theoretical field that hitherto provided the principal explanatory models for understanding interwar Romania, namely modernization theory – particularly in its more recent path analysis variant – and world-systems theory. It then proceeds to scale down the comparative civilization approach, underpinning alternative modernities theory into a more discrete, socially-grounded definition of alternative modernity appropriate to the specific time period and local context. This is accomplished, on the one hand, by means of a critical assessment of recent scholarship pertaining to the alternative modernity of interwar Romania and, on the other hand, by foregrounding the issues of local agency and geopolitical context. I thus argue that the vision of an alternative, quintessentially rural and “Romanian” modernity elaborated by the Bucharest Sociological School was inserted into the social structure by means of a culturally specific program of socio-economic modernization of the rural world. This program was consciously elaborated as a sociologically informed alternative to the dominant, urban forms of modernity prevailing in the West.

Rethinking the Past and Present of South-East European Societies Beyond War and Nationalism: The Case of Post-Communist Balkans

Paschalidis Panagiotis

Post- doctoral researcher, University of Macedonia-Thessaloniki, Greece

For the biggest part of the post- Cold War period, academic approaches on the political and economic orientation of the South-East European societies were dominated by historical interests such as violence and nationalism. This was the immediate effect of the violent disintegration of former Yugoslavia (1991- 2001). In the international public sphere, the representation of the South-East European region was largely shaped by discourses that recycled heavily charged and negative perceptions, mainly in the context of political and media discourse. This has led to a rather important misinterpretation of the wider political and economic transformation of the region and more importantly of the fact that these transformations did not affect the region collectively and indiscriminately.

These transformations concern three wider issues: the creation of new Nation- states, the process of the Euro- Atlantic integration and the post- communist transition. The incorporation of such a complex nexus of simultaneous but not necessarily interdependent processes has not been an easy task for any academic effort to explain the evolution of the region as a whole. However, during the 2000's it is obvious that a new wave of scientific researches marks a renewal in the study of the region by focusing on themes such as the post- communist heritage, the specificities of former Yugoslavia as a multi- national state and the particularities of the Western Balkans. The integration of Bulgaria, Romania and more recently of Croatia in the EU and the beginning of accession negotiations of Serbia with the EU are all developments that should encourage such an effort. This contribution will examine whether these trends could help neutralize the excessive discussion and representation of the Balkan/ South-East European region by proposing a more focused and less culturally biased study of former Yugoslavia. Furthermore, it will explore whether these trends could help promote an alternative (self-) perception of the region that could halt its symbolic exclusion from Europe.



Marxism and the Left in Pre-Communist Romania: A Study on Ideological Syncretism and Cultural Diffusiveness

Assoc. Prof. Victor Rizescu
University of Bucharest, Romania

Left-wing ideological pleading and Marxist thinking in Romania at the turn of the XIXth to the XXth centuries and during the interwar period were marked by a sustained tendency towards fragmentation, accompanied by the semblance of chronic and irretrievable feebleness. While undeniable, those shortcomings nevertheless came to be overemphasized in later historical representations of the topic, something which led to underestimating the impact of intellectual currents of the sort on the general evolution of Romanian society. International and post-1989 domestic scholarship framed this interpretative wisdom as to make the low profile maintained by the Left in pre-communist times largely accountable for the overly repressive nature of local communism and for the virtual absence of reformist and dissenting voices under the communist regime. If not reconstructed historically with the force of a vindication appropriate for narrating the vagaries of a chronically aggrieved minority, the Left has most often been depicted as provocatively exotic or embarrassingly quixotic, and the diagnostic has also been applied to the role played by Marxism in the intellectual life of the period. Imbued as they have been with a powerful sense of revulsion towards everything Leftist and Marxist, the characteristic ideological tendencies connected with the critical departure from communism and its survivals in the public space—and exerting quite powerful influences on academic writing—contributed to entrenching this view. The same can be said, in fact, of the literature produced in the country under communism, from the standpoint of a rigid historical materialism: placing a heavy emphasis on the “revisionist” nature of pre-communist social-democratic thinking and refraining from acknowledging the original Marxist inspiration of the populist/peasantist one, such works were also always reluctant to bestow a full-blown positive assessment on interwar communist figures—like Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, the only prominent representative of the Komintern brand of Marxism at the time—,

due to the embarrassing episodes of their later purging (and despite their subsequent partial rehabilitation).

The paper takes a new look on the topic. As far as the pre-communist Left—with Marxist socialism at its core—is concerned, the reassessment comes from a determination not to mistake diffusiveness for scarcity, organizational feebleness for intellectual paucity or ideological syncretism for cultural non-relevance. When approached in this way, the Left emerges as disseminating in society a surge for democratization, performing much the same pressures to this extent as its western counterpart.

As for Marxism itself, one can discover it as acting as an intellectual instrument suited to addressing specific contextual puzzles and put to work for different ideological purposes. Alongside its characteristic left-wing interpretations—populist, socialist and communist—, Marxist sociology is found as contributing decisively to shaping the intellectual structures of the three local varieties of liberalism: besides adding its touch to the elaboration of the dominant modernizing oligarchic liberalism of the National Liberal Party—by the means of an argumentation (advanced by Ștefan Zeletin) strongly recalling that of the German “socialism of the chair” and of the Russian “legal Marxism”—, it was also employed for framing a minority, free-trade vision, critical of precisely the NLP’s modernizing policies, as well as for rejuvenating the indigenous mid-XIXth century left-wing and radical-democratic liberal discourse in conjunction to the contemporary European social-sensitive, “new liberal” trend of thought. An attempt—advanced by Radu Dragnea, revolving around the cultural journal *Gândirea*—to making use of the categories of Marxist theory for adjudicating a part of the 1848 revolutionary culture on the side of religious-based traditionalism is also recorded as a most surprising proof supporting the view of the wide diffusiveness and significant effectiveness of Marxism in pre-communist Romanian culture.



Otherring the “Communist Enemy” in the Archives: Constructing the Jailor in the Discourse of Political Detention in Romania

Theodora-Eliza Văcărescu
University of Bucharest, Romania

This paper is not about the history of communist political detention in Romania per se. I am not after finding and establishing “facts” about the way the detention system functioned. Instead, I examine how historical “facts” about communist detention are constructed and how ethnic and gender categories are produced and reproduced along the way. My main sources of inquiry are archival documents and I additionally resort to other sites of meaning and knowledge production—historical narratives about communist detention and media discourses. I seek to challenge the unitary and monolithic historical narrative of communist imposition and perpetration as foreign and alien to the Romanian self.

To this aim, I explore how archival documents produce the communist enemy as “the other” of the Romanian self along the lines of ethnicity and gender: How do archival documents construct the communist “enemies”? What are the categories used to name and identify these enemies? What are the mechanisms that establish and legitimize these categories and what are the politics that inform the hierarchies produced by this historical narrative? Whose interests do these categories and hierarchies serve? In this way, I show how archives can constitute a site for the construction of a narrative that works as a mechanism of removal of the guilt of communism from the Romanian self, by means of producing a “foreign” communist other. I look at the documents generated during the 1950s and the 1960s for the research and archival database of Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty Research Institute and I inquire into the structures and dynamics of the information produced, evaluated, and stored in the archive. Thus, I argue that these narratives produce and reproduce ethnic and gender categories that serve the purpose of removing the “guilt” of communism from the Romanian self, while, at the same time, creating and legitimizing an “other” against which the Romanian self can be defined.

Panel 1: Politics and the State after the Fall
June 12, 10:30-12:30

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Dr. Emilia Zankina	ezankina@aubg.bg

Panel 2: Culture
June 12, 1:30-3:30

Dr. Vihra Barova	barov@abv.bg
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Dr. Caterina Preda	caterinapreda@gmail.com
Prof. Carol Silverman	csilverm@uoregon.edu

Panel 3: Memory and Space
June 12, 4:00-6:00

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Panel 4: Social Movements, Rights and Justice
June 13, 9:00-11:00

Dr. Andrea Grant-Friedman	andrea.grant-friedman@wmich.edu
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Dr. Daniela Pastarmadzhieva	daniela.pastarmadjieva@gmail.com
Dr. Claudia Udrescu	claudia.udrescu@fspub.unibuc.ro

Panel 5: Memory and Identities
June 13, 11:15-1:00

Dr. Bridget Costello	bridgetcostello@kings.edu
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Jovana Vukcevic	vukcevic_jovana@yahoo.fr

**Panel 6: Interrogating Dominant Discourses on Inter- and
Post-Bellum South-Eastern European Societies**
June 13, 2:00-4:00

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